

Aiken County Personnel Policy Review



Key Changes

- Removal of language from ordinance that is more appropriate for a policy manual-This allows Administration to make routine procedural changes more efficiently
- Selection (Section 4.2 a 1)-Electronic signature on a electronic submission is deemed to be the applicant's signature
- Selection (Section 4.2 a 5)-The Administrator may require that applicants for certain positions submit to a drug screen
- Selection (Section 4.2 a 6)-An Applicant may not be placed on payroll or begin work until background checks and drug screenings are complete and results are verified.

Key Changes

- Employment of Interns (Section 5.1 c)-Requires that interns pass a background check and sign a confidentiality agreement
- Employee Performance Evaluations (Section 7.1 b)-Requires Employees to sign evaluation forms. **If the employee refuses to sign, he is suspended from work without pay and if he does not sign the evaluation by 5:00 pm at the end of his second full scheduled work day, the County will consider that the employee has resigned.**
- Payment of Wages(Section 8)- This is a new section added to comply with the SC Payment of Wages act. It specifies when and where employees are paid and notifies them of deductions from their wages.

Key Changes

- Attendance and Leave (Section 9.3 b)-Leave policy in a more readable format. Clarification of years of service, For example: Section 9.3 b (3) Reads “At the beginning of the eleventh year of unbroken service”. Old policy read “At the beginning of the tenth year of unbroken service”.
- Attendance and Leave (Section 9.4)-A separate policy for EMS shift employees was created.
- Sick Leave (Section 9.5 a)-Policy clarifies sick leave for 12-hour and 24-hour shift employees. Accrual of sick leave reflects working hours per year. Regular full-time employees accrue sick leave at the rate of 3.69 hours per pay period (maximum of 720 hours). Employees working a 12-hour shift accrue sick leave at the rate of 3.87 hours per pay period (maximum of 756 hours). Employees working a 24 shift accrue sick leave at the rate of 5.2 hours per pay period (with a maximum of 1008 hours).

Key Changes

- Funeral Leave (Section 9.6 a)-Funeral leave is expressed in terms of hours of leave rather than days, 24 hours rather than 3 days.
- Meal Periods (Section 13.4)-Employees must take an unpaid meal period of at least 30 minutes away from their work station unless workload does not permit as approved by his department head.
- Break Period (Section 13.5)-Workload permitting, employees are entitled to no more than two(2) fifteen (15) minute breaks, one morning break and one afternoon break. **These breaks are not to be taken prior to the beginning of work or at the end of the work day or in conjunction with a meal period.**

Key Changes

- Employee Discipline (Section 14.1)-Supervisors must complete a report of disciplinary action. The supervisor is to show the report (**exception of oral warnings and termination**) to the employee for his signature with the understanding that that the employee's signature only acknowledges that the employee has seen the report (**does not indicate agreement**). **The employee must sign the report. If the employee refuses to sign the report, he is suspended from work without pay and, if he does not sign the report by 5:00 pm at the end of his second full scheduled work day, the County will consider that the employee has resigned from employment.**

Key Changes

- Employee Discipline (Section 14.3)-The disciplinary action that is administered for any particular act or acts of misconduct rests in the sole discretion of the County without regard to the way it has handled similar situations.
- Civic and Political Activities (Section 16)-When an employee files for an elected office, the employee will be placed on personal leave of absence without pay until termination of the campaign
- Dress and Appearance (Section 17.2)-Employees must dress in a professional manner that is appropriate to the work assignment and that is normally acceptable in professional business establishments.

Key Changes

- Social media (Section 17.3)- Employees are cautioned that any material posted that, in the County's sole opinion, reflects adversely on the County or causes a disruption in the workplace, is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including discharge.
- Drug free workplace (Section 17.8)-Employees are prohibited from reporting to work, suing or being anywhere on County property while under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or controlled substances. (any detectable amount).The County may test employees for drug or alcohol use in violation of this policy any time the County has reasonable suspicion of a violation of the policy.

Key Changes

- Employee Status Change (Section 18.4 b)-Promotion of present employees-Upon approval of the County Administrator, **in recognition of highly unusual qualifications or situations and other market factors**, employees may receive up to fifteen percent (15%) above the minimum.
- Retirement (Section 18.9 b)-The Council may offer benefits to retiring employees. These benefits may be paid in whole or in part by the County. However, such benefits are subject to change and there is no guarantee that once offered, the benefits will not be eliminated. **The Retiree has 30 days after retirement to accept benefits provided by the County**

Key Changes

- Nepotism (Section 23.1)-Members of an immediate family shall not be employed by the County when such results in one member of an immediate family supervising, evaluating the performance of disciplining, handling money or **providing any monetary or nonmonetary compensation**, or any other way being responsible for the employment status of the other immediate family member.
- Secondary employment (Section 25.1)-Employees must receive written approval before engaging in secondary employment. Approval may be withdrawn in the County's sole discretion.

Key Changes

- Workplace Privacy (Section 27)-Personal items and personal communications received or stored on County premises are not entitled to a guarantee of privacy.

Please Remember

- Department heads are expected to conduct reference check including telephone calls or personal contacts with previous employers of the applicant. (Selection-Section 4.2 b2)
- It is mandatory that each employee take at least half of his/her accrued leave during the current year or the leave is forfeited (**THIS WILL BE ENFORCED**). Each employee who handles cash as part of his job responsibilities is required to take at least five (5) consecutive days of annual leave in a calendar year, and his duties be performed by another individual in his absence. (Attendance and Leave-Section 9.3 b6)

Please Remember

- Employees anticipating retirement are advised to begin the retirement process at least three (3) months prior to their effective retirement date. Employees must communicate with human resources throughout the process.
(Retirement-Section 18.8 c)

Please Remember

- When an employee leaves the employment of the County, Human Resources and IT need to be informed ASAP in order to ensure that all security badges, email access, etc. are terminated.
- Human Resources/Administration is available to clarify information contained in the Personnel Policy, but it is the **responsibility of the supervisor to enforce policy.**